
Guidance 4(vi) Assessment Conversation for Equity and Enhancement (ACEE)

The University's approach to external examining is a focus which provides added value inputs around assessment design, at a programme level, supporting good practice and enhancement. There is less focus on approving individual assessments and externally moderating a large volume of assessments based on all modules within a programme.

There will still be an opportunity for External Examiners (EEs) to review assessments and see students' work, which will be carried out on sampling basis supported by the Assessment Conversation for Equity and Enhancement (ACEE) which will happen yearly (between June and September) setting out the priorities for the year.

The University carries out internal moderation which ensures the integrity and rigour of assessment practices. Sampling of this internal moderation still allows EEs to comment on the quality and standards of the programmes in relation to national standards and frameworks, and comment on the reasonable comparability of standards achieved at other UK providers with which the EE has experience.

Assessment Conversation for Equity and Enhancement (ACEE)

To support Programme Teams with the enhancement of their assessments and the related strategy they should have an ongoing dialogue with their EEs. This dialogue will be supported by having an ACEE meeting with them. This will set out the priorities for the year including assessments to be reviewed and student work seen.

1. Programmes Team hold a discussion with their EE(s) at a meeting between June and September, preceding the start of the academic year for students. This can be supplemented with further discussions through the year if required.
2. Confirm the Body of Evidence (detailed below) to be provided to EE at the ACEE.
3. Send all assessment tasks in a timely manner (for those modules on the programme as agreed with EE at the ACEE) with solutions/criteria, module handbook, proof of internal review, to the external examiner for external review and comment before the assessment tasks are distributed to students. This will enable the examiners to provide constructive feedback on the assessment or to raise any concerns. The EEs will confirm they have had this opportunity to comment on agreed list within their end of year examiners report. Programme Teams to ensure EE can access all assessment with solutions/criteria, module handbook, proof of internal moderation to inform enhancement conversations throughout their tenure. This is not for approval but to support ongoing enhancement conversations.
4. Provide sample packs (for those modules on the programme as agreed with EE at the ACEE) to EEs to support external moderation and confirmation of grades.
5. EE attendance is expected at main Programme Assessment boards, and the EE will be offered the opportunity to attend resit boards, but their attendance is not expected.

6. The EE is required to submit a written annual report confirming their overall judgement on student performance, the quality and standard of the programme, and, to confirm the assessment and classification processes are fair, reliable, and transparent. For enhancement, the EE can identify good practice and areas for development.

The ACEEs are an opportunity to work with the EEs to:

- ensure the integrity, rigour and fairness of assessment procedures is being applied consistently and fairly;
- clarify their role in overseeing the setting of assessment tasks, when they will be sent this information, and how they can give feedback and raise queries. Specifically agree the selection and composition of the assessment tasks to be scrutinised in an academic year;
- discuss the programmes/discipline learning, teaching, assessment and feedback strategy including key aspects of assessment strategies for example, the alignment of module and programme learning outcomes with assessment tasks; detailed advice and guidance for staff on the nature, extent and timing of feedback to students; grade descriptors or criteria to ensure a consistent approach to marking;
- discuss the design and delivery characteristics of the programme as set out in the programme specification;
- clarify marking and moderation protocols (question and assignment setting; model answers; double marking; blind marking; moderation);
- provide information on sampling and selection of student work that will be used to provide the evidence base for the external examiner. The sampling of assessments should be agreed at this meeting and should be based on a range of modules informed by whether they contribute to the classification of the award, the data on continuation and achievement indicate they require scrutiny (for example higher or low than others on the programme, trends which might indicate a cause for concern), and when they were last sampled (Guidance 4vii); and
- discuss arrangements and reasonable adjustments to assessment procedures for students with disabilities.
- Any CPD, Continuing Education or short course validated as a new standalone credit bearing module, must have External Examiner oversight within its first cycle.

For new EEs this discussion can be combined with the Programme Briefing as described in section 4.3.4 of the LQEH.

The EE will be given access to the relevant MyLearning site and also be given the opportunity to engage with all assessment tasks/marketing criteria and confirmation of internal review/scrutiny etc. However, during the ACEE meeting **the assessment components that need to be reviewed and confirmed in an academic year will be agreed, and it will also be agreed when these will be provided to the EE**. Over the time of the EEs tenure, it would be expected that the EE reviews and confirms the appropriateness of all assessments and criteria.

Body of Evidence

The EE is required to make an overall judgement on student performance and the quality and standard of the programme. To do this the Programme Team will provide the EE with a *Body of Evidence*:

Core requirement to **support quality and enhancement**

- A Programme or Discipline ACEE session with Programme Team (held June-Sept)
- Provision of a Programme/s *Body of Evidence* to support EE to make informed judgment concerning student performance and the quality and standard of assessment and the programme.

Aspects of the body of evidence to be agreed with EE at the ACEE

- the details of which modules and which elements of assessment should be formally reviewed by the EE in an academic year; It should be noted that all assessments (examination question papers and coursework assignment tasks with their marking criteria/rubrics/model answers) will be available to the EE for feedback, but a list of modules/tasks will be agreed to be reviewed each academic year, depending on the nature of the discipline, or any that may have been identified for review by enhancement actions or student feedback;
- the requirement for attendance or involvement at exhibitions, performances; and
- the requirement for EE to meet and have discussions with students.

Core aspects of the Body of Evidence

Before the start of the academic year the following will be available to the EE

- Programme handbook including programme specification, and module narratives.
- All *agreed* assessments (exams/coursework/etc) with grading criteria/rubric/solutions with proof of internal review and module handbook.

After Assessment has been completed

- Sample packs for all modules identified during the ACEE session for sampling this academic year to the EE.
 - Module handbook
 - All assessment with marking criteria/solutions/rubric
 - Record of internal review of assessment for each component
 - Moderation Form: Student Assessed Work (for each assessment component)
 - Sample of work for each component (as agreed) with feedback
 - Module overall grades (excel spreadsheet or input grid)

The External Examiner, within their end of year annual report, would confirm that these measures/evidence which form the body of evidence were sufficient to provide an overall judgement on student performance and the quality and standard of the programme. The EE report will also include feedback to the programme team and institution on overall strengths and weaknesses on the learning, teaching, assessment and feedback approaches.